

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 432 492

SO 030 666

AUTHOR McDonough, Judith
TITLE Technology, Teaching, and Citizenship Education.
PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizenship Education; *Critical Thinking; Higher Education; Instructional Effectiveness; Secondary Education; United States Government (Course); *World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS Bill of Rights; Supreme Court; Technology Integration

ABSTRACT

Today's computer technology is particularly beneficial for a class that is learning issues of government. Government document sources are well organized on the world wide web. Analyzing the Bill of Rights and how the Supreme Court has interpreted challenges is an exercise that incorporates citizenship education, offers insight into judicial decision making, and utilizes primary sources. For example, using the web site, "Supreme Court Cases by Topic," students can use keywords such as "cruel and unusual," "search and seizure," "free press," or "free speech" to find a list of cases in the database that deal with those topics. Versions of Supreme Court cases can be accessed quickly. In a few pages, the facts of the case are outlined, the decision is explained, and the majority opinion is given. The Court considers the Constitution, the intent of the framers, precedent, and in the case of the Amendment, the evolving standards of justice. After discussing the students' views of the case in question, they can examine the case to see what the Court decided and on what constitutional basis the justices made their decision. After the students have been introduced to the judicial side of the issue, the class can review the legislative side and use the background they gained from studying cases to assess pending legislation. When they have completed their evaluations of legislation under consideration, they can write to their representatives to express their views and urge their congressmen to vote appropriately. Web site addresses are provided. Contains 3 notes. (BT)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

SO 030 666

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

Judith McDonough

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Technology, Teaching and Citizenship Education

In today's world, technology is an integral part of the classroom curriculum. As schools introduce computers and hook up to the internet, increasing numbers of students have access to a multitude of materials and primary sources. Teachers and students alike benefit from the easily accessible resources. Computer technology is particularly beneficial when dealing with issues of government because government documents are well organized on the web. The resources expand the options available to teachers and contribute to a more hands on approach to teaching.

Analyzing The Bill of Rights and how the Supreme Court has interpreted challenges is a exercise that incorporates citizenship education, offers insight into judicial decision making and utilizes primary sources. The following web addresses are particularly useful when dealing with the Judicial Branch:

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/judiciary.html> - The Judicial Branch

<http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/historic.htm> - Selected Historical Decisions

<http://law.house.gov/l.htm> - Internet Law Library

<http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/topic.htm> - Supreme Court Cases by Topic

<http://www.uscourts.gov> - Federal Courts' Home Page

Using the web site, Supreme Court Cases by Topic, you could search cruel and unusual, search and seizure, free press or free speech. You would get a list of cases that dealt with that topic. You can quickly access the full or edited versions of Supreme Court Cases. The edited versions are great for working in class. In a few pages, the facts of the case are outlined, the decision is explained and the majority opinion is given. Prior to Internet access, finding cases to illustrate issues was a formidable task. Most of us would shrink

from the prospect, but now, research is quick and easy. You simply type in an amendment or issue to access a list of pertinent cases.

Looking at individual cases engages students in legitimate content and offers opportunities to reach the higher levels of critical thinking. Teachers can describe scenarios based on real cases and have the students look up how the court decided the particular question. The procedure can be used with any of the Amendments.

The following activities exemplify this approach. If you are studying the Eighth Amendment, remind the students that the Supreme Court decides issues of law not the facts of the case. The Court considers the Constitution, the intent of the framers, precedent and in the case of the Eighth amendment, the evolving standards of justice. The Court will give emphasis to what today's society considers cruel and unusual because such things as flogging and branding were socially acceptable in the eighteenth century of the framers.

Describe the Florida case where three men were sentenced to death for a murder committed during a robbery. Two were present and participated in the murder, but the third was the driver of the getaway car. Florida had a law that allowed aiders and abettors in crimes to receive the same punishment as the major perpetrators. The driver of the car claimed the sentence constituted cruel and unusual punishment and violated his constitutional right. After discussing their views, have the students look up the case to see what the Court decided and on what constitutional basis the Justices made their decision. They will discover that the Court found the imposition of the death penalty inconsistent with the Eighth Amendment stating, "It is impermissible for the State to treat the individuals alike and attribute the same culpability to those who killed the victims."¹

Discuss the Oklahoma case where 15-year-old William Thompson murdered his brother-in-law, who had been abusing his sister. Because of the nature of the crime and Thompson's past volatile behavior, Oklahoma allowed Thompson to be tried as an adult. He was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death.ⁱⁱ His attorney claimed it was a violation of the cruel and unusual punishment prohibition of the Eighth Amendment to sentence a 15-year-old to death. After locating the case, the students will find that the majority opinion held the verdict did violate the cruel and unusual prohibition of the Eighth Amendment. The justices felt that jury determinations indicated that society would find executing people under sixteen unacceptable.

This approach is quite effective because giving questions piques their interest, and they are anxious to learn what the Court decided. Reading the summaries of the cases and the majority opinions, the students discover the constitutional issues involved and learn how the justices arrive at their conclusions. If there are dissenting opinions, they have the opportunity to compare differing viewpoints on constitutional points.

Having introduced the students to the judicial side of the issue, you can then move to the legislative side and have students use the background they gained from studying cases to assess pending legislation. With the increase of violent crime committed by increasingly younger people, teens became the perpetrators and the victims. Since the subject is topical, the students are naturally interested. As society tries to grapple with the problem, more emphasis is placed on accountability. This is evidenced by the move to try minors as adults, to hold accomplices as responsible as primary offenders and to enact mandatory sentencing for repeat offenders. The following activities allow students the opportunity to form their opinions and act on those ideas.

Have students get summaries of pending crime legislation. This information is available on the Legislative Branch's web page, <http://thomas.loc.gov>. Go to thomas and select major legislation by topic, 105th Congress. Choose criminal justice to get a list of legislation and the present status. The students can analyze the proposed statutes and decide whether they think they are within the purview of legitimate government activity or whether they violate the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. Mention possible ramifications of legislation. Cite the 1980 case in Texas where an individual received a sentence of life imprisonment without parole under a recidivist statute though his three crimes involved non-violent forgery that netted him \$229. The Supreme Court upheld that conviction.ⁱⁱⁱ

When students have completed their evaluations of legislation under consideration, have them write their representatives, express their views and urge their congressmen to vote appropriately. They could also make modifications to existing legislation or make proposals of their own. If students get involved and work to influence legislation, they are practicing democracy. Putting their knowledge to work to influence their society is an example of authentic assessment.

Computer technology helps develop an awareness of the democratic process by giving the students the opportunity to work with a variety of materials, primary sources and up-to-date data in a meaningful way. Government sources greatly enhance our ability to stimulate active learning and to encourage citizenship education. Having our students use technology also prepares them for the twenty-first century. The Internet is an excellent resource to enrich curriculum and instructional objectives.

Notes

ⁱ Edmunds v. Florida, 458 U.S. 782 (1982) <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/topic.htm>

ⁱⁱ Thompson v. Oklahoma, 487 U.S. 815 (1988) <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/topic.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bernard Schwartz, *A History of the Supreme Court*, (Cambridge: Oxford University Press 1993), 365



*U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
(OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*



Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

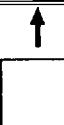
I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title:	<i>Technology, Teaching, and Citizenship Education</i>	
Author(s):	<i>Judith McDonough</i>	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date:	<i>12/98</i>

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY <hr/> TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY. HAS BEEN GRANTED BY <hr/> TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY <hr/> TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
Level 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 	Level 2A <input type="checkbox"/> 	Level 2B <input type="checkbox"/> 
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) and paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only
Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.		

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service-agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature:

Judith M McDonough

Printed Name/Position/Title:

Judith M McDonough, Asst. Prof.

Organization/Address:

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
History Department
204 Keith
Indiana, PA 15705

Telephone:

(724) 357-2285

Fax:

E-mail Address:

JRMCDONO@grave.iup.edu 12/12/88

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:

Address:

Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:

Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM: